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Oberfriedhof

Oberfriedhof is an imaginary village in Canton Uri, situated near the top of the Klausen pass, linking Linthal with the Schächental. The railway between the towns of Linthal and Altdorf on the main line over the Gotthard pass was never built in reality. Nor, for that matter, was the metre gauge branch from the end-on junction of the Rhätische Bahn and furka Oberalp at Disentis. So a group of members in Cumbria set out to rectify this omission.

The resulting HO and HOm layout received critical acclaim when it was shown in incomplete form at the 1992 AGM in Carlisle. Not only was it surrounded by members throughout the morning and afternoon, a gallant few were joinin in operation well into the small hours after the dinner. The layout had its first public outing at this year's Barrow exhibition over Easter and is now available for other exhibitions. See the box for details.

The story is that the main line over the Gotthard pass has been blocked by a landslide near Sisikon, north of Altdorf. As a result the line over the Klausen pass is being used as a diversionary route until the bolckage can be cleared. This simple ploy allows a wide variety of trains to run over the line at close intervals. Virtually any train seen in Switzerland can be

justifiably run over the model. OK a triple current TGV would be a bit out of course, but who is quibbling. The main point is that the layout is designed as a showcase where typical Swiss trains, standard and metre gauge, can be shown in action for the edification and education of those unfortunate individuals who have yet to encounter the prototype in reality.

Oberfriedhof will be publicising Swiss Railways and the Swiss Railways Society for many years to come.

Layout Statistics

Layout size: 30ft x 9ft, not including barriers.

Scale 1:87 (3.5mm to 1ft).

Gauge 16.5mm (HO) and 12mm (HOm).

Period 1980 to present day.

Viewing from front only.

Operators required: 4 to 6

Electrical requirements:

1 x 13A socket.

Set up time approximately 3 hours.

Transport:

1 hired Transit plus 1 car.

Distance no object.

Insurance value (1993) £17,500

Contact address:

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This train was especially for the steam buffs as we were headed by loco C5/6 No.2978 of 1917, now of the Vapeur Val-de-Travers (VVT) fleet and for which we were invited to pay a supplement of 5 francs each for the trip back to Travers. We left late for this twenty-five minute journey and as we progressed in stately style, with scores of photographers along the track-side to record the scene for posterity, we wondered anxiously whether our connection would be held, enabling us to complete the excursion in reasonable time.

We need not have worried. At Travers we quickly transferred to the regular service headed for Neuchâtel and were soon on our way. En-route our Federal Railways official changed

out of his splendid uniform into the rather more mundane Ticket Inspector's garb which he evidently wears in that capacity with the CFF. After that, he cashed up his takings from the sale of commemorative tickets, preparatory to handing them in upon arrival at Neuchâtel, waiting in line with members of the public at the booking clerk's window for this purpose.

There was just time for a quick coffee before joining our train to Bern where we bade George goodbye as he went to attend a birthday party arranged for him by his son.

Thank you, George, for a splendid day out and our thanks too to the CFF, SNCF, RVT and VVT for co-ordinating their efforts to make it all happen.